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The Supreme Purpose

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Old Testament Scholarship—

The Scandinavian Contribution

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Recent Scandinavian Contributions to Old Testament Studies

B. F. PRICE

To be asked to write an article for this Journal on the above subject without a knowledge of the Scandinavian languages is a tall order, especially as hitherto so little appears to have been written in English on this theme, apart from the article on Pentateuchal Criticism in the recent volume 'The Old Testament and Modern Study' and Bentzen's 'Introduction to the Old Testament'. Fortunately, the latest addition to the series *Studies in Biblical Theology*, 'Oral Tradition', by Eduard Nielsen, deals with just this subject, and is written by one who is himself in full sympathy with the Scandinavian movement. This article will therefore be in the nature of an extended review of Nielsen's book.

Origins of the Recent Movement

In his first chapter, which is a historical introduction to the present controversy between the Scandinavians and those who hold the more generally accepted critical position, Nielsen traces the origin of the present movement back to the Swedish scholar Nyberg's publication of his studies in Hosea, less than twenty years ago. But although Nyberg made some revolutionary pronouncements concerning the way in which the traditions about the prophets were handed on from one generation to another, there were distinctive contributions from Scandinavia to Old Testament studies well before Nyberg. The first of two volumes by J. Pedersen of Copenhagen on 'Israel: its Life and Culture' appeared in the twenties, throwing new light on Hebrew psychology, and laying renewed emphasis on the central place of the cult in the life of ancient Israel. Meanwhile, in another field of Old Testament study, Mowinckel, the Norwegian scholar, was busy with his studies on the Psalms particularly those which he associates with the annual enthronement festival at Jerusalem.

The 'Traditio-Historical' Method

It is, however, with the nature of the transmission of Israel's traditions, whether historical or prophetic, that the latest Scandinavian contribution has to deal, and we need to recognize at the outset that the

'traditio-historical' approach, as it is called, is not a simple denial of the validity of historical criticism in the interest of conservatism in Biblical scholarship. Nyberg, Engnell, and the other Scandinavian scholars who are associated with them, are not out to overthrow the 'assured results' of 19th century biblical criticism because they feel they undermine confidence in the reliability of the biblical record, but because they believe their predecessors were wrong-headed in their approach. They distrust the type of scholarship which could confidently analyze passages in the Old Testament into a number of parallel documents, assigning this half-verse to 'J' and the next half-verse to 'P', since this analysis presupposes a method of narrative-construction which they hold to be foreign to the mind of the ancient Israelite, and so artificial that it could only be postulated in such an analytical culture as that of modern Europe.

Such a view of the process through which the narratives in the Old Testament reached their present form is due in part, they claim, to an unwillingness to give due stress to the place of oral, as against written, tradition in the Semitic world. We ourselves rely to such an extent on written records that we find it difficult to imagine a culture in which the spoken word could be looked upon as a more reliable form of tradition than the written. The older scholars did, it is true, allow a place for oral tradition, but only at an early stage in the transmission of a legend, when its form would still be extremely fluid. No reliance could therefore be placed on the details of a story at any stage preceding its taking written form in some document. Hence the importance of analyzing the documentary sources used in the construction of a story as found in the form in which we have it in the Bible,—the various sources could be laid side by side, so to speak, and compared with a view to finding which strata were the earliest, and thereby an approximation might be reached to the earliest known form of the story. Of the oral tradition which preceded the appearance of the earliest written source, nothing could be known with any certainty, and the later parallel sources were chiefly of value as evidence upon which one could build up a picture of the evolution of Hebrew religion or secular culture in its successive stages.

Such a depreciation of oral tradition, together with the corresponding stress on the reliability of the written word, would be natural enough if one had to deal with a culture like our own, where, to quote Nielsen, 'the nearer a written source is to its subject, the more confident is its investigator'.¹ Our powers of learning by heart have been atrophied because we do not have to rely on our memory,—we can consult a book, so that knowing where to find the information we seek tends to become the recognized substitute for knowing the facts themselves.

In his second chapter, therefore, Nielsen brings forward evidence to show that in the ancient world there was a constant emphasis on the value of learning by heart, even at the stage of civilization at which it was possible to conserve a written record. Particularly was this true of religious traditions, and a still current example of this from the Semitic world is the stress laid on the oral transmission of the *Quran*, which continues without dependence on the written book. In fact, Nielsen quotes the Swedish scholar Engnell as maintaining that the *Quran* itself

¹ Oral Tradition, p. 19.

took written form primarily in order that the Muslims might be a people of the book, like the Jews and the Christians. Nor is it in cultures where writing is neglected that the Hindu scriptures and the Confucian classics are committed to memory.

Any evidence, therefore, which may be brought forward to prove the great antiquity of writing in the Near East does not by itself indicate that the Old Testament scriptures took a written form at an early date. The Scandinavian scholars are hardly interested in the fact that recent evidence pushes back the use of writing in Palestine to a period a good deal earlier than was commonly acknowledged by 19th century scholars, since that evidence is only of positive worth for those who value a tradition in proportion to the antiquity of its written form. They readily acknowledge that writing was used in Palestine in early times, but maintain that it was largely the work of the specialist. Nielsen quotes Nyberg as saying, 'Writing was principally employed in practical matters, for contracts, covenants, monuments . . . above all, for letters . . . But the actual tradition of history, the epic tales, the cult-legends, doubtless generally the laws too, must in the main have been handed down orally. Writers should certainly not be reckoned among the prophets and poets except with the greatest caution.'¹

The same writer is quoted at the beginning of Nielsen's third chapter as saying, 'The written Old Testament is a creation of the post-exilic Jewish community ; of what existed earlier undoubtedly only a small part was in fixed written form.'² From this we can see how much more weight is given to oral tradition by the Scandinavian scholars than their 19th century predecessors would have allowed. By means of an examination of the evidence provided by the use of the words 'write', 'book', etc., Nielsen can show that there is comparatively little reference to the use of writing either in the Pentateuch or in the records concerning pre-exilic Israel, whereas there is a strong tradition, particularly in Deuteronomy, of the transmission of the law by word of mouth from one generation to the next. How, then, can we account for the point in Israel's history where the oral tradition is transformed into scripture, seeing that so much reliance can be placed, on this view, on the spoken word ? It is significant that the change takes place, according to Nyberg, at about the time of the Exile, since it was at that time or somewhat earlier, that Israel felt her culture to be threatened from within and from without. In fact, one might say that although the Scandinavians and their opponents both see in the revival of Assyrian power at the middle of the 8th century an event of considerable significance for Israel's religious history, that significance is differently interpreted by the two schools of thought. We are accustomed to the view that Amos was spurred to prophetic activity by the rising threat from Assyria on the eastern horizon, but for Nielsen the significance of the international situation in the middle of the 8th century was that it led, not to the inception of prophecy in its classical form, but to the preservation in writing of those prophetic utterances which were in tune with the current tendency to a centralization of Israel's cultus at Jerusalem.

¹ Oral Tradition, pp. 24f.

² Op. cit., p. 39.

It may help to clarify the position adopted by the Scandinavian scholars if we attempt to contrast their attitude to certain parts of the Old Testament with that of the earlier critics, and here we may remind ourselves that Nyberg's pioneer contribution dealt with the composition of the prophetic books, in the first place that of Hosea. Earlier critics had worked on the assumption that each such book could be analyzed in such a way as to provide a number of verses which could be attributed to the prophet himself, while the rest was secondary, added at a later period in the growth of the book. We are familiar with the discussions concerning the 'authenticity' of the last half-chapter of Amos, or the extent of the 8th century material in the book of Micah, and Nielsen is perhaps at his most illuminating in the fourth and last chapter of his book, 'Examples of Traditio-Historical Method', in which he adopts a different approach to some of the controversial material in Micah, this being one of his three main 'examples' in this chapter. He admits that Micah iv-v may reasonably be considered as a 'complex of tradition' originally independent of the chapters which precede and follow, since its subject-matter consists of predictions of what will occur in the coming Day. Nielsen sees the material in these chapters as consisting of a nucleus, iv: 9—v: 6, which is surrounded by a 'deposit' of related material, the subject-matter of the whole being the Remnant. That is to say, there is a unity of content here, and the unit finds its place in the book of Micah, not accidentally, but because it is closely linked in its theme with what precedes it,—the conclusion of the third chapter, which also speaks of the fate of Jerusalem. Whereas scholars of an earlier generation would assume a *literary* development in such a book as Micah, those of the traditio-historical school look upon the entire process of growth as one of *oral* transmission, resulting in the accretion of a series of 'deposits'. But whether the central 'nucleus' can be attributed in each case to the prophet whose name the book bears is a very debatable question, and on the whole the Scandinavians tend to be sceptical about the possibility of recovering the original words of the prophets.

Mention has already been made of the assumption which we are accustomed to make, that from time to time additions were made to the books bearing the names of the prophets, without considering how such a process could have taken place. But this whole assumption is called in question by the traditio-historical school, as, for example, by Nielsen: 'If one man began to add something, then a hundred others could protest and accuse such an editor of falsification and produce proofs, in black and white. Or are we to believe that at various times editorial committees were convened and perhaps by a vote of a majority resolved to incorporate an oracle of dubious origin in one prophetic book or another?'¹ Such questions are difficult to answer if we think in terms of growth at a literary stage, whereas the expansion of the earliest traditions concerning any particular prophet becomes much more readily conceivable if we imagine it all as taking place at the stage before there was any written book bearing the prophet's name.

¹ Oral Tradition, p. 84.

The New Approach to Pentateuchal Criticism

It is, however, not only in their new approach to the prophetical writings that the Scandinavians have made an important contribution,—they have also challenged the accepted position regarding the growth of the Pentateuch. We are all familiar with such long-established symbols as J, E, D, P, and the rest, which have become so generally accepted that, to quote North's opening sentence in his essay on Pentateuchal Criticism in 'The Old Testament and Modern Study': 'Thirty years ago it looked as if the problem of the Pentateuch was reaching a definitive solution'. And now the situation is fluid once more. Even at the beginning of the thirties, Pedersen was protesting against the cut-and-dried separation of different literary sources in the Pentateuch, as though one could be said to have taken form in the ninth century and another in the seventh. Instead, Pedersen sees all the strands which went to the making of the Pentateuch as developing simultaneously side by side in various cultural environments in Israel. For Pedersen the aim and purpose of the Pentateuch is the recital of the Exodus-legend, which was the basis of the central redemptive festival in Israel, the Passover. All that precedes and follows is subordinate to this theme, whose historic content is uncertain.

The emphasis on the centrality of the Passover-legend is found also in the presentation of Engnell, whose recent (post-war) views on the Pentateuch are set out in the article by North already referred to. Engnell denies that there is sufficient evidence in the Pentateuch as we now have it for separating out the generally accepted sources. Features said to be characteristic of one source are frequently found in material attributed to another source, and it is an evasion of the difficulty to bring in a 'redactor' to account for the inconsistency.

In the concluding section of this book, Nielsen uses the Flood-narrative as one illustration of the methods of the traditio-historical school, and criticizes what he considers to be the inconsistency of Gunkel and other commentators on Genesis. So far from accepting the existence of two rival schemes of Flood-chronology, with that of P correcting the earlier system of J, he claims to see one consistent scheme, which had its rise in the cultic background of the Flood-narrative, which like so much else in the Old Testament is connected with the Temple-ritual in Jerusalem,—in this case with the annual New Year festival in the autumn, at which renewal of well-being for the coming year was sought. So once again we notice the emphasis on the Temple-cult, a feature we have already observed in connection with Pedersen and Mowinckel.

Although Engnell rejects the customary analysis of the Pentateuch into half-a-dozen or so sources, he concedes the existence of a stage at which Deuteronomy had not yet become united with the rest of the Pentateuch, which he calls the 'P-work'. This latter had grown up, partly in written form (the laws), but largely in oral form (the narratives) in complete independence of the 'D-work' (Deuteronomy—II Kings). The completion of both these traditional accounts of the past Engnell attributes to a post-exilic date, and considers that, soon after that, they were amalgamated in such a way that the tradition of the death of Moses was

removed from its place at the end of the P-work, and inserted in its present place in Deuteronomy.

Along with their scepticism regarding the validity of 19th century methods of source-criticism, the Scandinavians tend to look askance at the parallel emphasis on textual criticism, with its reliance on the versions, and ready acceptance of conjectural emendations of the Hebrew text. It is natural that those who lay such stress on the reliability of oral tradition should be sceptical of the claims of those who see in any difficult passage in the Masoretic text an error in transmission.

Positive Values in the New Approach

What positive contribution does the Scandinavian emphasis make to our understanding of the Old Testament? Although it is a reaction against the type of criticism current at the end of the 19th century, we need to remind ourselves once more that it is not an attempt to defend the integrity of the Biblical text from those who would divide it into fragments. The traditio-historian's 'reverence and respect for tradition is merely an expression of the fact that he believes the creators of our written Old Testament capable of better things than mere editorial clumsiness'.¹

We have seen how critics of a past generation tended to undervalue the so-called 'secondary' material in the prophets, and exalt the 'authentic' oracles, but the traditio-historians are now supplying a useful corrective by suggesting to us that the whole process of building up the Old Testament scriptures was one which took place under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in such a way that nobody should glory in men, whether Amos or Hosea, Isaiah or Jeremiah.

It is a great gain that we are being reminded once again that the Old Testament is primarily a book written with a religious purpose, and that its authors were not concerned simply with the recording of history for its own sake, but with the relation of the saving history of the past to the existence of the nation as a worshipping community in the present. If the new approach involves some radical re-thinking of accepted positions in Old Testament studies as doubt is thrown on a too-easy acquiescence in evolutionary views of Israel's religion, that in itself is a contribution for which we may be grateful to Scandinavian Old Testament scholars, as we are grateful also to Nielsen for presenting their views to the English-speaking world.



So true is it that the kingdom of God comes not with observation that the greatest things Christ did for it were done in the night and not in the day; His prayers meant more than His miracles. And His greatest triumph was when there was none to see, as they all forsook Him and fled . . . His nights were not always the rest of weakness from the day before, but often the storing of strength for the day to come.—P. T. Forsyth in *The Soul of Prayer*.

¹ Nielsen: *Oral Tradition*, p. 63.

A Historical Debate Renewed

V. P. THOMAS

In the Mar Thoma Syrian Church at Malabar, South India, a lively debate is going on concerning certain matters of faith and practice, the most important of which has to do with the mode of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. As one listens to the different points of view held by different individual leaders and parties, one is reminded of the Reformation period in the 16th century A.D. in Europe when the same questions were discussed by Martin Luther, John Calvin and Zwingli.

The Reformation, which took place in the ancient Syrian Church of St. Thomas in the 19th century, has many things in common with the Continental Reformation. To go into a detailed discussion of those common elements and principles is not within the purview of this article. The reader can in his own mind make comparisons as we point out some of the outstanding points of the Reformation in the St. Thomas Syrian Church.

The Continental Reformation had two aspects: first, the rejection of Papacy, and second, the purification of faith and practice. In the Syrian Church rejection of Papacy and reformation of faith took place not at the same time but separately, with more than a century and a half in between. The history of the St. Thomas Christians shows that their Church was forcefully brought under the authority of the Pope and made a part of the Roman Catholic Church by the decrees of the Synod at Diamper in 1599. Many of the distinctly Roman Catholic beliefs and practices were introduced in the Syrian Church at that time. In 1653 the Syrian Christians, excepting those who wanted to stay with the Roman Catholic Church, by an oath taken in front of the 'Coonan Cross' (bent cross) declared themselves free from the Roman yoke for ever. This incident did not result in the reformation of faith and practice. That happened in 1836 under the leadership of Abraham Malpan. The following are some of the principles of the reform movement and the changes brought about by it:—

1. Acceptance of the Bible as the source of authority in matters of faith and practice.
2. Rejection of the principle of *opus operatum* (mechanical and magical principle) in interpreting the sacraments.
3. Insistence on faith as a necessary condition of salvation and of receiving grace through the sacraments.
4. Rejection of the theory of transubstantiation. All prayers and phrases which implied transubstantiation were deleted from the liturgy.

5. Rejection of the idea that the Holy Communion (*Qurbana*) is a sacrifice. The phrases in the liturgy which suggested the idea of sacrifice were altered to read 'sacrifice of grace, peace and praise'.
6. Rejection of the practice of praying to the saints and the blessed Virgin Mary, and of praying for the departed.
7. Acceptance of the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5), and affirmation of the representative character of the priests.

The above reforms brought into being the Mar Thoma Church. The reformers claimed that the Reformation was a restoration of the original biblical faith of the early St. Thomas Christians of Malabar. Under great evangelistic zeal and spiritual fervour the Mar Thoma Church flourished. However, time and again there have been differences of opinion regarding some matters of faith and practice. The Church's attention was particularly drawn to the mode of Christ's presence in the Eucharist.

It is inferred from the negative statements of the Synod of Diamper that the Syrian Church earlier than the Synod had no doctrine of Transubstantiation but believed that the bread and wine were signs and symbols of the body and blood of Christ, and maintained the spiritual presence of Christ in the sacrament. Abraham Malpan affirmed this faith. Mar Thomas Athanasius, during the course of a witness he gave in the Travancore court said the following regarding the Eucharist: 'The bread and the wine used in the Mass are regarded as the sign and semblance of the flesh and the blood of Jesus Christ. . . . We deny transubstantiation and the physical presence of Christ in the body and blood'. (*The Mar Thoma Church and its Doctrines*, by K. K. Kuruvilla, page 30.)

From 1900 on there have been various committees appointed for the revision of the liturgy. In all the discussions in those committees there was a great deal of unanimity on fundamental principles. But on the question of the mode of Christ's presence in the Eucharist two apparently irreconcilable views found expression. One group maintained that there is some mystic connection between Christ's presence and the consecrated bread and wine. This mystic connection though ununderstandable to the human minds is nevertheless real. It is not the faith of the believer that causes the presence of Christ but Christ's own words of institution. Faith is necessary to apprehend and appropriate the benefits of the sacrament. The other group maintained that the bread and wine are signs and symbols of the body and the blood of Christ, and that the Eucharist is a service of remembrance of Christ and of all the redemptive benefits through him. The sacrament is of great spiritual value to those who receive it in faith. To the disbeliever the elements remain as mere bread and wine. To the believer they represent the broken body and the shed blood of our Lord.

In the present controversy the same views are expressed, the same arguments adhered to, and there seems to be no reconciliation. Both groups appeal to the Scriptures. The first group holds that when Jesus said. 'This is my body', 'This is my blood', he designated the bread and wine as his own body and blood. Therefore the elements remain as

Jesus designated them to be. The second group interprets Jesus' words to mean that the bread and wine symbolize or represent his body and blood. There is no substantial identity implied in the verb 'is'. Jesus in instituting the sacrament has asked us to continue it in remembrance of him (Luke 22: 19).

The first view has similarities with the theories of Luther and Calvin. Even though Luther rejected transubstantiation, he was convinced of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The recipient actually partook of Christ, but beneficially only if he had faith. This is in line with the conservative view expressed in the Mar Thoma Church. In trying to explain how Jesus was present in the bread and wine, Luther developed the theory of Consubstantiation which maintained that Christ's body and blood were given in, with and under the elements. Different from this is the view expressed by Mr. C. P. Mathew and others. According to them the connection between Christ and the Eucharistic elements is not consubstantial but mystical and spiritual. This view is closer to that of Calvin. According to Calvin Christ is mysteriously (miraculously) and dynamically conveyed to the communicant who partakes in humble faith. There is a real participation, but his emphasis is on the spiritual.

The second view represented by Mr. K. N. Daniel and others is similar to that of Zwingli who taught a mnemonic view of the sacrament. The bread and wine are signs only. The Holy Supper is in remembrance of Christ and of the redemptive benefits we derive from him.

The present Episcopal Synod has given freedom to the members of the Church to hold either of the views. So the *Thaksa* (liturgy) recently published contains alternative prayers, wherever necessary, to suit the two groups. In the preface to this new edition it is stated that there is a substantial agreement among the people on the following:

1. Sacraments are means of grace only to those who receive them in faith.
2. The sole basis of salvation is faith in Jesus Christ.
3. Christ has instituted in the holy fellowship of his Church the ministry of the Word and of the sacraments as means of grace.
4. Priests are not mediators, but representatives of the people. As representatives they offer prayers, preach and teach in the name of God and proclaim the blessing of God. (p. vii).

I believe that there are truths expressed in both views. They are to be incorporated into a synthesis, which will be true to the Bible and the evangelical position of the Church. I believe that the Mar Thoma people in general believe that the elements are consecrated by the Holy Spirit and by the words of institution as recorded in the Bible. To the believers, consecrated bread and the wine represent the broken body and the shed blood of our Lord. The *Holy Qurbana* is an act of remembrance as well. Our Lord has said it (Luke 22: 19). It is repeated in the Syrian *Thaksa*. After the consecration of the elements the priest prays thus:

Priest : As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do proclaim the Lord's death until He come.

Congre.: Lord, Thy death we commemorate and Thy resurrection we proclaim, and Thy second coming we look for. May Thy blessing be upon us all.

Priest: O Lord, we commemorate Thy death, Thy burial and Thy resurrection on the third day, and Thy ascension into heaven and Thy session on the right hand of God and also Thy second coming when Thou shalt judge the world righteously and render to every man according to his works. . . .

The sacrament, however, is not merely a remembrance. It is a remembrance which is intended to result in realization. It is a realization of the blessings of Christ's redemptive sacrifice. It is a realization of the believers' living in Christ. The participant makes the occasion of remembrance an occasion of communing with the resurrected and living Christ.

A true Christian lives in Christ ; Christ lives in him. It is a continuous experience. The Eucharist, however, is the Christ-appointed occasion when we in a special way remember Him and all His redemptive benefits to us and to all men, and in a special way realize, our 'life in Christ'. This experience of communion is a spiritual experience which a believer enjoys as he participates in the Communion Service and in the communion elements. In the words of St. Paul, 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?' (1 Cor. 10: 16). This experience of communion cannot be explained in terms of Christ in the elements substantially, or consubstantially, or mystically. Communion is experienced through faith and in a spiritual manner. If one does not draw near in faith and expectancy he may not have the experience of communion. The act of service will remain for him only an act of remembrance.

Just as *Holy Qurbana* is an occasion for communion with our Lord, it is also an occasion for communion with our fellow-believers, the other members of Christ's body. It is also an occasion to express our joy and thanksgiving for God's grace and mercy shown towards us. For this reason it is called Eucharist.

One final word : The present conflict is spoken of as a conflict between ritualists and evangelicals. As one reads the material available one gets the impression that both parties hold evangelical faith. So it seems to me that the conflict is between two attitudes of mind, the conservatives and the radicals. In any society we will have these two groups. We need them both. Both must exist together. If we have only the conservatives life will dry up without any growth, sunk in formalities and rituals. If we have only radicals, life will blow up. Progress depends upon both groups existing together, correcting each other in love and understanding, both deeply devoted to a common divine purpose.

The Supreme Purpose

S. R. BURGOYNE

One of the great leaders of the Church has said, 'The supreme purpose of the Christian Church is to make Jesus Christ known, trusted, loved, obeyed, and exemplified in the whole range of individual life—body, mind, and spirit—and also in all human relationships. This is incomparably the most important work for every Christian.'¹

Everywhere the relevance of evangelism is under discussion against a background of international tensions, and, in India, the building up of a nation. Is the evangelistic obligation of the Church relevant in such a situation?

Surely Christian witness is one of those things which are right in themselves, and not simply because of ends they serve. It is a duty, and not something to be justified by obvious relevance. 'For people who believe in the Christian God evangelism is a duty and privilege so plain, so incontrovertible, that all talk of "relevance" is a half-vulgar intrusion of the utilitarian in a realm where it cannot apply.'²

The Bible is an up-to-date handbook in this respect, and no section is more definite regarding evangelism than the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Our answer to the question regarding relevance is there in the 26th and 29th verses. 'The angel of the Lord . . . the Spirit said unto Philip.' The command to 'go . . . preach' is clear beyond all doubt, and every true disciple of Jesus Christ must say with Paul, 'Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel'. There must be deep conviction that evangelism is a task which no Christian dare try to sidestep. It is a sharing of spiritual blessing, the opening of a heart overflowing with love toward God, the expression, not of superiority, but of humility which has acknowledged the universal need of sinful man, and recognized the fulfilment of it in Jesus Christ. The lesson in this respect is clear in the winsomeness of Philip's approach to the Ethiopian. There is no superior criticism or denunciation, but loving response to the enquiring heart.

It is instructive to note how he waits for the questions and the invitation in verses 31 and 34, 'How can I, except some man guide me? . . . of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?' There is surely a lesson here for the witness in India. There are indications that the day of Gospel preaching in the bazaars and public places is passing. Such a form of presentation of the Message was too often open to misrepresentation, or to the negative debate which diverted men's minds from their own spiritual needs. However, the way of conversational evangelism is always open in this deeply religious land, and there

¹ 'The Larger Evangelism', John R. Mott, p. 7.

² 'Let Me Command', W. Sangster, p. 15.

is always opportunity for the Christian disciple who is ready to listen to the enquirer, as well as to speak for his Master.

This personal approach, this man-to-man contact is very clearly indicated in the chapter under discussion. Look at verses 27, 31, and 34, and notice the play on the word 'man'. First, 'a man' with an enquiring mind, a seeker; then 'some man', the soul-winner, the channel for the message of salvation; and finally, 'some other man', the One of whom the prophet speaks, the Saviour of men. What a vivid picture this gives us of a Spirit-guided messenger, so eager to share the good thing he has with another that he runs to catch up with the chariot, ready to answer the questions which the enquirer puts to him.

Still more important is the content of Philip's testimony, 'the good news of Jesus', (v. 35 R.S.V.) It is vital that the word to the seeker should be presented in humility, but with clear certainty. In this country, so religious, so devout, so all-embracing in its eclectic faiths, it is imperative that the message should be crystal-clear. 'Christianity is Christ', to use the words of Dr. Griffith Thomas. Sundar Singh was asked, 'What did you find in Christ that you did not have in your own holy Book?' He replied, 'I found Christ'. 'Yes', they said, 'but what truth did you get in the Bible that you could not get in your own Scriptures?' He replied, 'I found Christ'. 'Yes, yes', they said, 'we understand, but what advantage have you that you could not get in your ancient religion?' 'I have Jesus Christ', he said, and that was his only answer. Philip used this same approach, and 'preached unto him Jesus'.

The mighty impact of Jesus Christ upon India and her leaders needs no proof, for it is self-evident; but the disciples of Jesus many times fail to use the most powerful equipment they have. 'The whole counsel of God' is concentrated here. The content of the message is centred in Jesus Christ, and, though modes of presentation may change with generations, this remains constant and compelling.

The need of a fresh revelation to the men of this age is a fact which must be recognized. Julian Huxley writes, 'The modern man has a God-shaped blank in his consciousness'. It is, in other words, a godless generation in a sense that no former generation has been. Education has become increasingly secular, and the spiritual dimensions of life have been missed altogether. God is left out of family life, education, business, politics, and international dealings.

People will not regain their consciousness of God unless our message is without confusion and uncertainty. There must be no vague reference to a deity of the kind a writer described as 'a fortuitous concourse of atoms', but rather a vital demonstration of a living, personal Being working for man's salvation. Philip had done this very thing before the crowds in Samaria, for he 'preached Christ unto them' v. 35; and now he presents the message in exactly the same way to the spiritually hungry individual.

Take note that the basis of this presentation is the Scriptures: v. 35 'Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture.' The particular quotation is from the powerful 53rd chapter of Isaiah where the Sin Bearer is revealed. The Word of God reveals God to men, and just as surely does it expose man's sin. The Good News means most to those who recognize their deep spiritual need. In these strange days there is

little consciousness of sin, yet perhaps this is only true in the sense that men have not recognized what is wrong with them. Life for a great many just does not make sense, and they are quick to grasp at any system which promises a solution.

The truth is that man is off the track, and is wandering aimlessly in search of something which he finds hard to name. There is a Scriptural word, rarely used by modern preachers, which aptly describes humanity. Man is 'lost'. He was made for God, but is now off-centre, and centred in himself rather than in His Creator. Oswald Chambers correctly defined Sin as 'my right to myself'. The fact of sin is an integral part of the Message.

Philip had his text chosen for him, and no doubt he took full advantage of the opportunity to point to the Redeemer from sin, and the possibility of reconciliation with God. The Sin Bearer was the Sacrificial Lamb 'wounded for our transgressions'. What more glorious theme could we have than God's approach to man, His intervention seen in the Atoning Death of Christ? Much of our preaching weakness is due to our failure to present the Cross, and to guide sinful men and women to the Saviour Who 'for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross'. It is true that modern man objects to such a doctrine, and the offence of the Cross has never been so apparent as now.

Nevertheless the atoning death is central in the New Testament, and we neglect the theme of our peril. 'The simplest truth of the Gospel', says theologian Dr. Denney, 'and the profoundest truth of theology, must be put in the same word—He bore our sins'. This is the Gospel which will win the allegiance of men; and only this preaching of 'full salvation now', as John Wesley called it, has any promise in it of spiritual revival in the Church.

This incident on the desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza indicates also that Philip's preaching led to the climax of commitment. 'Preaching to a decision' has become a somewhat trite phrase, but it is dynamically essential to our testimony. The well-known Anglican report 'Toward the Conversion of England' states that 'The aim of evangelism is conversion'. When Philip 'preached unto him Jesus' he obviously expected that there would be response in committal. Such appeal for individual acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord must form the climax of evangelistic witness. The personal loyalty of every man and woman is what Jesus Christ seeks, for, as the Apostle Paul writes, He is 'the Son of God Who loved *me* and gave himself for *me*'. Philip 'preached Christ to the people of Samaria, v. 5; they 'gave heed', v. 6, and 'believed', and were 'baptized', v. 12. With the same drive for personal surrender he 'preached... Jesus' to the queen's treasurer, and had the satisfaction of leading him to acknowledgment of Christ as Lord, and into a new-found joy, (v. 39).

This leads us to some comment upon one of the by-products of evangelism indicated in verses 8 and 39 of this chapter of the Acts. In the depth of spiritual experience there is a divine spark which warms the heart and is likely to show itself in emotion, in 'great joy' and 'rejoicing'. The Book of the Acts actually begins with an account of the rather disconcerting emotion of Pentecost, and records the experiences of others

who, like the lame man of chapter three, entered into the New Life experience of Christ 'walking and leaping and praising God'.

There are times, we must admit, when religious excitement is merely nervous excitement and nothing deeper. Such an act is superficial, and can be harmful. Any stirring of the emotions must include a way for moral and ethical expression. That is why it is essential that our message's content should have a strong theological basis. As a writer in an English church paper recently remarked, 'Religious emotion can become a permanent power in society only when it is allied with theology without which it tends to evaporate like water in the sands. Only theology can canalize it.' The Ethiopian was faced by a faithful witness who gave him his grounding in a theology wholly Scriptural. The recent Graham Campaign in Great Britain has been notable for the overwhelming emphasis, in preaching, instruction, and follow-up, upon biblical foundations.

Thus we return to the first premise. The preaching of the Message of Salvation in Jesus Christ is wholly relevant for the men of this age simply because the Word of God has revealed not only the Eternal Father, separated from His children by Sin, but also the Sin Bearer, the Redeemer, Who desires to give new life to men everywhere.



The core of the problem of pain is the apparent uselessness of so much of it. We can endure suffering with a comparatively good grace when we feel that something worthwhile is being achieved thereby . . . But the case is different when the suffering is suffering that seems to serve no good purpose whatsoever. Pain unused is pain wasted ; pain wasted is pain inexplicable ; it is hard to bear or contemplate it in any spirit other than resentment.

The problem is in practice transformed out of all recognition when it is realized that there is no pain which cannot by the grace of God be so used as to contribute to the world's redemption from evil. We have seen how the forgiving of an injurer by his victim gives the most clear and straightforward instance of this transforming use of pain. We have seen too how all suffering, whether or no it can be traced to any blame-worthy source, is itself a potential source of further evil, and how the church is called to be a body of men and women through whom our Lord is transforming it into material for increasing the world's output of goodness . . . Whenever pain is so borne as to be prevented from breeding bitterness of any other evil fruit, a contribution is made to the rescuing of God's creation from the devil's grip. It is not in the thought that he is cultivating his own holiness, but in humble gratitude that he is allowed to offer his suffering to Christ to use in His redemptive work that the Christian can find the light which illuminates both his own life and the doctrine of the atonement.—L. Hodgson: *The Doctrine of the Atonement*.

One God in Three 'Persons'¹

P. de D. May

The Implications of the Life of Jesus

The Christian believes that the life of Jesus Christ reflects under human conditions the life of an eternal Son of an eternal Father in the power of an eternal Spirit. It follows that, if we wish to know something of this life of God in eternity, we must think away so far as possible the human conditions under which the Son of God lived His life here on earth. This means that, for example, we must think of the Son or the Word, and not of Jesus, for that is the ordinary human name attached to the divine Son when on earth. We must see the eternal principles on which the Son based His actions, and not be concerned with the actions themselves. We must discard those titles of Jesus which describe His activity for men on earth (such as Saviour, Shepherd, Redeemer, Priest) and concentrate on those which describe His relationship to God (such as Son, Word, Wisdom, Image). And we must think of the Holy Spirit not so much as Comforter or Guide or Indweller or Sanctifier, titles which describe the Spirit's activities for men, but as 'proceeding from the Father'. It is not easy for us human beings to think away the only conditions of life which we know and to picture the conditions of life in God Himself, but if we believe that Jesus is Son of God, we can be sure that what He said and did will give us some indications of what this life in God is like. In fact when we strip away the human conditions in which Jesus lived His life, we can make four statements about God in His threeness.

1. *Father, Son and Holy Spirit are a Unity.*

As we read our scriptures and reflect on our own Christian experience, we cannot but notice that the actions of Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all directed to one single end, that men may enjoy the fellowship of God (1 John 1:3; John 17:21; Titus 3: 4-6). Sometimes we hear sermons or addresses which suggest that, for example, the Son had to offer Himself in death on the Cross in order to appease an angry Father and that while the Father is a hard and merciless judge the Son is kind-hearted and merciful. There is no basis whatever for such ideas in the New Testament; Father, Son and Holy Spirit work together, as we say, like a team, for man's redemption and salvation, and there is no suggestion of any contrast or opposition between any of the Three. If we look beyond and behind the human situation to which this united

¹ This article is a chapter from the Rev. Peter de D. May's forthcoming book 'The Doctrine of the Trinity' to be published by the C.L.S. in the 'Christian Students' Library'.—ED.

activity of the Three is directed, we shall naturally infer that the Three Who act in this united way are Themselves a unity.

2. *Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct and separate Beings.*

But although Father, Son and Holy Spirit work together 'as a team' for man's salvation and are, therefore, a unity in Themselves, scripture leaves us in no doubt that within this unity They are three separate and distinct Beings. The Father sends the Son and the Holy Spirit (Galatians 4: 4-6); the Father raises Jesus from the dead (Acts 2:32); the Father pours forth the Spirit (Titus 3:6). The son prays to the Father (Mark 14:36) and actually says, 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' The Son acts in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:1) Whom He breathes out upon His disciples after His resurrection (John 20:22). The Holy Spirit is given by the Father (Romans 5:5) from Whom He proceeds (John 14:26), a second Comforter as Christ was the first (John 14:16). In fact, as we read the words and life of Jesus in the Gospels, we cannot but conclude that within the unity of God there are three separate and distinct Beings Who exist at one and the same time together.

It is very important to hold firm to this Biblical insistence that there are three distinct Beings in God, because people tend today, as they always have in the past, to regard the three-foldness of God in a very different way. There have been some, generally known as Sabellians, who have in effect said that God made Himself known to man in three different ways at three different times in history; in the Old Testament period He revealed Himself as Father and Creator, in the New Testament period as Redeemer and in the present period as Indwelling Spirit. It is, to use an illustration from St. Basil of Caesarea, rather like a man playing three parts in a play, who, while remaining the same man, wears a different mask for each part. Scripture clearly does not allow us to think of God like this, as though Father, Redeemer and Indweller were different parts played by God at different periods of history, for, as we have seen, Father, Son and Holy Spirit exist at one and the same time as three distinct Beings.

There have been others who have thought of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as three different attributes or aspects of God, such as fatherly care, redeeming love and indwelling power. Scripture, however, talks of the Three quite clearly as being in a personal relationship to each other such as is impossible for abstract attributes or aspects of God. For us Christians the Trinity is quite different from the Trimurti of Hinduism, according to which God is called Brahma when He creates, Vishnu when He protects and Shiva when He destroys; 'these names only denote the different aspects of God' (D. S. Sharma, *A Primer of Hinduism* p. 74f.). Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct and separate Beings within the Unity that is God, and not mere attributes or aspects of God. We shall see later how theologians, in dependence on scripture, have defined the distinctions between the Three.



3. *Father, Son and Holy Spirit are each wholly and completely God.*

When we considered the biblical teaching about God's transcendence and His activity among men, we discovered that one way of understand-

ing this was to think of God as extending His personality among men in His Son or His Word through His Spirit, and we saw that although the whole of God was acting in His Son and through His Spirit God Himself was not limited to nor contained by His Son or His Spirit ; the one transcendent God is beyond man's sight and comprehension, and, therefore, greater than His Son or His Spirit as experienced by men. But Christians have always felt that although this may be so in the sphere of revelation among men, yet it is not so in God Himself. Within God Himself the Son cannot be less than the Father, nor the Spirit less than the other Two ; Father, Son and Holy Spirit are each wholly and completely God. One of the reasons why the Church discarded the description of Jesus as the Logos or Word was that it tended to make the Son subordinate to the Father, since a word whether uttered or thought is less than the thinker. It will be remembered that Arius in the fourth century maintained that the Son or Word was less than the Father even though He might be in the Godhead, and the Church, with Athanasius as its mouthpiece, insisted that the Son was fully and completely God.

The belief that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are each wholly God, produces one of the paradoxes of the Christian faith. For it might be said that if Each of the Three is completely God, then there are three Gods, for God plus God plus God add up to three Gods, not one God ; and Muslims can scoff and say that our arithmetic is wrong, since 1 plus 1 plus 1 equals 3, not 1. The Christian answer to this is that if we want to talk of God numerically, One is not the most suitable word to use ; Infinity would be much better, and everyone knows that infinity plus infinity plus infinity add up to infinity, not to three infinities, for just as it is impossible to add anything to infinity so it is impossible to add anything to God.

4. *Mutual Love is the dominating principle of the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

The principle which governs the life of Jesus Christ on earth is the giving of Himself up to the will of God, a self-giving which culminates in the Cross. 'Lo, I am come to do thy will' is the verse with which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews sums up the whole life of Jesus (Hebrews 10:9) and this self-giving of Himself to God on the Cross is inspired by the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 9:14). But love, which is the motive behind such self-giving, is characteristic, too, of the Father, for not only does He love the world and give His Son for it (John 3:16 ; Romans 5:8 ; Ephesians 2:4 ; I John 4:9:10), but love is the word which describes His attitude to His Son (John 5:20 ; 10:17 ; 15:9, 10 ; 17:23-26) to Whom He has given all things (John 3:35). Thus we may say that the Father loves the Son and gives Him to the world in love, that the Son loves the Father and gives Himself to death on the Cross in love, and that it is the Holy Spirit Who prompts this self-giving on the Cross. If we strip off the human side of this activity, we shall naturally conclude that within God Himself the Father loves the Son, the Son loves the Father and it is the Holy Spirit Who prompts this mutual love ; it is hardly surprising, therefore, that St. Augustine should have thought of a Trinity, within God Himself, of Lover, Beloved, and Love itself, or, in his own words,

of 'One Who loves Him Who is from Him, One Who loves Him from Whom He is, and Love itself'.

These then are the conclusions about the eternal Trinity which may be drawn by the Christian who believes that the life of Jesus reflects under human conditions the life of an eternal Son of God.

Three Persons in One Substance

The problem which faced the Church was to find a phrase which would sum up the conclusions about the Trinity which may be drawn from the life of Jesus ; it had to find a formula which would safeguard the unity of God and at the same time ensure that, within the unity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit were each a distinct Being, and were each wholly and completely God. It was, and is, a most difficult problem to solve, and, since the eternal Trinity must always be a mystery to us men, one that will always baffle our human understanding. The formula by which the early Church summed up its belief in the Trinity was 'Three Persons in One Substance'. We do not propose here to discuss in detail the way in which this phrase came to be accepted by the Church, but merely to indicate briefly what it meant when finally fixed at the end of the fourth century.

Person and Substance

The English word 'person' corresponds, in this phrase, to the Latin word 'persona' and to the Greek word *ὑπόστασις* (hypostasis). The meaning of the Greek word, as finally fixed by the Church, was 'objectivity in relation to other objects'; or, to put it in another way, 'that which distinguishes and marks off one individual from another individual of the same species or order'. Thus if I have two kinds of fruit in my hand, an orange and a plantain, and someone asks me, 'What is the difference between the orange and the plantain?' I shall describe the orange and the plantain in detail, and my description will in fact be of the 'person' or 'hypostasis' of the orange and the plantain, that which makes the orange an orange and not a plantain or another fruit.

The English word 'substance' corresponds to the Latin word 'substantia' and to the Greek word *οὐσία* (ousia). The meaning of the Greek word, as finally settled, was something like 'primary being', or, to put it in another way, 'that which distinguishes and marks off one species from another species'. Thus if I have in my hand two things of a different species, say an orange and a sparrow, I need only say, to distinguish them, that one is a fruit and the other a bird. I shall then be describing the *οὐσία* of the orange and of the sparrow, that which marks them off from other kinds of things.

Three Persons in One Substance

When the Church decided that the formula 'Three Persons in One Substance' satisfied its thought about the Trinity, it was in fact answering two groups of questions about Father, Son and Holy Spirit. First it was answering the group of three questions: 'What is it which marks off and distinguishes the Father (or the Son, or the Holy Spirit) from beings of another order?' The Church's answer was: 'Godhead', for

the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God, and all other beings of whatever order are not God ; yet there are not three Gods, but One God. This is what the Church means when it says: 'One Substance'.

The second group of questions which the Church was trying to answer was: 'What is it which marks off and distinguishes the Father (or the Son, or the Holy Spirit) from beings of the same order (i.e., from the other Two) ?' The Church's answer was that Each is different from the Others, in that Fatherhood is characteristic of the Father, Sonship is characteristic of the Son and it is characteristic of the Holy Spirit that He 'proceeds' from the Father (*and* the Son, according to the Western teaching, *through* the Son, according to the Eastern). This is what the Church means when it says: 'Three Persons'.

In saying: 'Three Persons in One Substance' the Church is therefore asserting that while Father, Son and Holy Spirit is Each wholly and completely God within the unity of God, Each is also a Being distinct from the Others.

It should be noticed, especially by those concerned with translation, that the word 'person' in this phrase 'Three Persons in One Substance' does not really correspond to the word 'person' as we understand it in modern English. As we have seen, its primary meaning is 'objectivity in relation to other objects', or, 'that which marks off and distinguishes one individual from another of the same species', that which makes Prabhudas Prabhudas and not Christadoss, and an orange an orange and not a plantain. That the early Fathers did not necessarily take it to mean 'person' in the sense that it bears today is shown by the fact that when they wanted to illustrate 'Three Persons in One Substance' they chose to use analogies drawn from nature rather than from human relationships. Possibly the two most popular analogies were those of spring, fount and river, and sun, radiance and light ; in each of these analogies there is one common 'substance', water or light, distributed in three forms, spring, fount and river, or sun, radiance and light. But it is to be noted that, like every analogy, these are not fully satisfactory in that strictly the three elements are not distinct and there is missing that personal relationship which would seem to be characteristic of the eternal Trinity.

Finally let us conclude this chapter with those sentences from the so-called Athanasian Creed which comment most relevantly on the phrase, 'Three Persons in One Substance' :

So the Father is God, the Son God, the Holy Ghost God ;

And yet there are not three Gods, but one God.

So the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, the Holy Ghost Lord ;

And yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord.

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to confess each Person by himself to be both God and Lord ;

So are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion to speak of three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, nor created, nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone ; not made, nor created, but begotten.

The Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son ; not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.
There is therefore one Father, not three Fathers ; one Son, not three Sons ; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.
And in this Trinity there is no before or after, no greater or less ;
But all three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal.
So that in all ways . . . , both the Trinity is to be worshipped in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity.



The common life of the people of God in this world is more properly thought of as a movement than as an organism. We have here no abiding city but seek one which is to come. Most of the decisive events in the Church's life take place in periods of secular and ecclesiastical confusion. At no significant period in its history did Israel present the picture of a unified and coherent culture and when it came nearest to doing so, it was in danger of corruption . . . It was in the most 'disintegrated' and secularized places of the ancient world like Corinth, Alexandria and Rome that the Church won many of its converts.—Daniel Jenkins in *Tradition and the Spirit*.



God is not known so long as we believe what we are told about Him, nor even when we buttress this belief with reasons drawn from the wisdom of the ancient world. God is known only when He is met, and that is when He comes to meet us, whether it be in the assembly of His people, or in the reading or hearing of His Word, or in the midst of the storm where He appears and with His simple I AM casts out fear. The intuition of primitive man is not wholly astray, after all. In the tumult of the impersonal forces of nature and of history the personal presence of Christ is found. And Christian faith is simply the recognition of this encounter when it occurs.—H. A. Hodges in *Reformation Old and New*.

Book Reviews

Christians and Christianity in India and Pakistan : By P. Thomas, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London. pp. 260. 18s. net.

To the growing body of literature on the Christian enterprise in India, Mr. P. Thomas's *Christians and Christianity in India and Pakistan* is an interesting addition. Though Christians form only 2% of the population of India they are by no means an insignificant minority. Admittedly they are making a notable contribution to the development of India and Pakistan into healthy and enlightened nations, and appreciative references have been made to this contribution by responsible spokesmen of the majority communities in both these countries. Recent events in India have served to focus attention on the antiquity of the church in India as well as on the strength of its links with the outside world. At such a time as this a book on Christianity in India can be a contribution to the promotion of interreligious and international understanding, but it is doubtful if the book under reference is qualified to play such a noble rôle.

The book, however, has merits of a high order. The author has tried to place the origin and development of the church in India in the context of world history as well as of the history and culture of India. This is a feature that will be welcomed by all students of history. The church is represented not as an exotic growth but as part and parcel of the Indian scene. The chapter on 'The influence of Christianity on Hinduism' is one that may be read with interest and profit not only by Christians and Hindus but by students of culture and civilization all over the world. Secondly, the author has a pleasant style by which interest is sustained throughout the book.

Notwithstanding the good qualities of the book it suffers from serious limitations. First and foremost is a lack of perspective and a sense of proportion. The result is that the picture that the author paints of Christianity in India tends in many parts to be out of focus. To take an illustration: the book claims in its sub-title to give 'a general survey of the progress of Christianity in India from Apostolic times to the present day' and yet the survey is mostly of two sections, admittedly important sections, of the church in India, viz., the Roman Church and the Syrian Church. Of the 14 chapters in the book, 4 may be said to deal with political, cultural, or general history, 7 with the Roman and Syrian history and only 3 with the history of Protestant missions and churches in India and Pakistan, or in terms of pages only 54 out of 244 are devoted to non-Roman and non-Syrian history.

Again, the treatment of the subject is lopsided from the point of view of the relative importance of the periods dealt with. To our author the golden age of Christianity in India, it would appear, is the early period

and the 16th and 17th centuries and he obviously does not share the point of view of Dr. Latourette, the famous church historian, who characterizes the 19th century as the 'great century'. The author says, 'The latter half of the 19th century and the 20th century were marked in the mission field by the growth of organizations and an absence of outstanding personalities.'

The last chapter—that on 'Christianity in India'—is the least satisfactory in the book. It contains 4½ pages. We are given some bare facts about the National Christian Council, the Church Union movement and the Roman Catholic hierarchy in India and the modern attitude to proselytizing activities of the missionaries. What interests the author about the Anglican and the Methodist Churches is the number of their bishops and hardly anything else! The great body of Lutherans in India is dismissed in five words and one does not know what to make of them! We read 'The Lutherans have six churches'. (p. 243).

The picture as a whole is a disappointing one and raises many questions in the minds of the reader. It would appear that the author is not aware of many live issues that the churches in India and Pakistan are facing today.

Another defect noticeable in the book is a tendency on the part of the author to dogmatize on questions which should be subjected to critical examination. A case in point is his assumption of the apostolic foundation of the Syrian Church of Malabar. The subject is discussed in Chapter II. Though the writer starts out with a commendable sense of historical detachment it is not long before he accepts the St. Thomas tradition almost as a proved fact. He delivers judgment on the apostolic origin of the Malabar church in no uncertain terms when he says, 'no serious student of Christianity in Malabar can doubt the validity of the tradition'. Yet it is a fact that serious students of history are ranged on opposite sides on this very question! The author has apparently little difficulty in making statements such as the following:—'Practically the whole Brahmin community of Palur was converted by the Apostle' (p. 14). 'After consecrating a near relative of the Perumal as the Bishop of Chera, St. Thomas left for China He founded several Bishoprics in the Tamil country . . . (p. 16) . . . it is fairly certain that he (the apostle) preached the gospel in Afghanistan, the Punjab and Sind'. (p. 21) . . . 'the probabilities are that St. Thomas gave the primitive Indian church a simple Dravidian liturgy, which they could understand and appreciate (p. 30). Statements such as these are not likely to pass muster with historians of Christian origins or with experts in the science of liturgies. Again, the author is inclined to think that St. Bartholomew too visited India and founded churches in North Konkan on the west coast. He leans for support on the opinion of two scholars and does not think it necessary to examine the question in detail.

Further, one finds it difficult to accept the judgment of the writer on certain 'men and things', especially as these judgments are not based on data supplied to the readers. He calls Francis Xavier 'by far the greatest Saint and mission worker Europe has ever sent out to the East'. Protestant writers have paid numerous tributes to the burning zeal with which Xavier propagated the faith and the utter abandon and self-sacrificing devotion that he showed in the service of His Lord and

Master. He is a saint venerated as such by Christians in India of all persuasions. And yet to yield Francis Xavier the palm as 'the greatest mission worker from Europe' is making an invidious distinction which shows scant regard for facts. On a long range view, is it so obvious, as the writer seems to think that in the methods that Xavier adopted or in the results that followed he qualifies for this superlative encomium? Students of history will be able to place side by side with Xavier other names which deserve such a distinction. Again, in discussing the method of accommodation pursued by Robert de Nobili in Madura the author does not show much awareness of the force of arguments which may be brought against it from the point of view of Christian morals. To quote from the book, 'strictly speaking de Nobili was quite justified in his claims. By a wide interpretation the word "Brahmin" means a priest and as such he was not wrong in maintaining he was a Brahmin' (p. 66). A historian without bias of any kind would be a rarity and it is good to find that the author is guilty of only occasional lapses of the kind noted above. In his treatment of Portuguese Missions and the relations of the Portuguese with the Syrian Church, he has tried not to let his ecclesiastical affiliation influence unduly an objective treatment of the events he describes.

There are a few factual errors, too, in the book to which attention may be drawn. The Serampore pioneers did not translate the Bible into 36 languages (p. 166). They translated the Bible or parts of the Bible into 34 languages and Malayalam was not included among these. Serampore College was established in 1818 and not in 1821 (p. 167).

Notwithstanding all that has been said above the book is an eminently readable one. Overseas readers will find it of special interest where the author touches upon missionary work in its bearing upon the struggle for political freedom in India. The author has the instinct of a journalist in selecting dramatic events and characters and describing them in such a way as to capture the interest of the readers. To this category belongs the story of Begum Samru, which otherwise has little claim to be included in a book of this kind. The illustrations in this book add much to its attractiveness. The book is a mine of information and in the hands of a discerning reader, should prove to be a source of much illumination as well.

C. E. ABRAHAM.

Against The Stream : (Shorter Post-War Writings, 1946-52): By Karl Barth. S.C.M. Press, 16/-.

The sections of this book that I am really concerned with in this review are the second and third, entitled:—

II. *The Christian Community in the Midst of Political Change*: Documents of a Hungarian Journey, and III. *The Church between East and West*. And for the following reason: It was his published lectures, discussions, letters, etc., from his Hungarian journey that prompted Emil Brunner's famous *Open Letter* and the sharp criticism of many Church Leaders in Western Europe and America regarding his attitude to

Communism. The point of Emil Brunner's *Open Letter* (printed in this collection of Barth's writings) is to question Barth's stand on this matter, and to ask why he doesn't show the same strong opposition to Communism as he did against Nazism. In the course of his letter Brunner tries to show that Communism is the logical consequence of totalitarianism, and therefore a greater threat than ever Nazism was, to human rights and freedoms. These closing words will give some idea of how strongly he felt that all encouragement should be given to members of the Hungarian Reformed Church who had suffered, and were suffering, because they were not prepared to 'collaborate with the Communist authorities'. 'I simply cannot grasp why you, of all people, who condemned so severely even a semblance of collaborationism on the part of the Church under Hitler, should now be making yourself the spokesman of those who condemn not merely outward but even inward spiritual resistance, and why you should deride as "nervousness" what is really a horror-struck revulsion from a truly diabolical system of injustice and inhumanity.'

The first words of Barth's reply to Brunner are that 'you do not seem to understand'. And perhaps many of us would imagine ourselves likewise to be amongst the ranks of those who do not understand! What Barth is asking from the very beginning is that we should try and forget all about the conflicting ideologies and their propaganda that fill our minds continually in these modern times, and think *first* about our responsibilities as *Christians*, and not as representatives of Western Democracy (or Communistic regimes). So Barth insists that only when the Church is clear about its nature and its function can it really confront the world and witness as its Lord commands. Its main duty, then, is to be true to its Lord in any political circumstances, denouncing evil when it appears, but not to decide in principle that one particular form of the State is more 'Christian' than another. Thus it is not the Church's function to decide in advance that Communism must be necessarily evil.

Further, in considering the present conflict of East and West, the Christian answer must take into account that this conflict is simply a 'world-political struggle for power'. So when we speak of East and West, says Barth, we refer now-a-days to this conflict between the two world powers: Russia and the United States of America. They are trying to be, in their own way, the saviour or master of Europe, and yet the result of all their efforts is that they become afraid of one another and feel threatened by one another. So we live in an age of 'cold war', Iron Curtain, rival blocs and sickening propaganda. Surely we must be aware that even the East may have cause to be distrustful of the West in this kind of atmosphere! Out of this analysis of the situation, Barth insists that for us, as Christians, 'fear must not be allowed to be our Counsellor in this matter'; and actually this power-conflict is not our concern at all. In other words, it is not the Church's function to take sides in this power-conflict: and if it is going 'to call men back to humanity' and stand for reconstruction, then, 'it can only walk between the two', and the Church in both East and West must tackle the evils in their own midst and remember the teaching of Matt. 7, v. 3.

This seems to me to be the main line of Barth's thought in this matter. But of course the leading question of Brunner's letter has not been answered yet. Barth answers Brunner in more detail in his article *The*

Church Between East and West, and his main reason for making a distinction between Nazism and Communism is that the former 'tried to represent and recommend itself in the guise of a falsified Christianity'. The real crime of the Nazis was that they tried to substitute a national Jesus for the real Christ, and thus their whole movement was anti-Christian. The point about Communism is that it is not so much anti-Christian as coldly non-Christian. But at this stage it ought to be emphasized that Barth is fully aware of the aggressive nature of modern Communism, and it is just as well to quote this passage to make it clear. 'All that Asiatic despotism, cunning and ruthlessness in the Near and Far East, and especially in Russia, has been and has meant from time immemorial, has certainly become abominably and horrifyingly aggressive today in the guise of Russian Communism, and we are terribly conscious of it.' But he goes on to say, 'Must we not discriminate in our view of contemporary Communism between its totalitarian atrocities as such and the positive intention behind them?' If we try to do this sincerely then he feels we cannot say one totalitarianism is as bad as another ; and we must admit that Russia, for all its totalitarian atrocities, has tried to tackle the social problem in a constructive way. Has the West, then, something superior to show the world ? In this Barth is saying that the West is justified in accusing the East of inhumanity in its method ; but he fears that the West all too easily tries to cover up its own deficiencies, or even evils, by attacking the policies and methods of the East. Is it not essential that the West should try and see itself occasionally in the light of the charges the East brings against it ? Then Christians will see that 'they must refuse to hurl an absolute "No" at the East'. Barth thus sees that the function of the Church, as previously mentioned, is to work for reconstruction and reconciliation, and, by accepting God's Judgment in this modern situation, dedicate itself, not to a military crusade, but to the Word of the Cross whereby men can be reconciled to God and so to one another.

Now it is obvious that the problems that Barth dealt with in his writings are no less critical in 1954. I think that his remarks on the power-conflict between East and West fail to give adequate attention to the way that conflict arose, and so to the point that at the end of the war, and in the immediate post-war situation, America was remarkably 'trusting' in terms of the good intentions of Soviet policy. (See Churchill's *Memoirs*, volume VI.) When such 'trust' was not reciprocated and international conferences petered out in dismal failure, then it became obvious that a 'hardening' of attitudes on both sides was the terrible prospect for the future. The tragedy of the situation is that America has not recovered from that 'shock', but on the contrary has gone to such an extreme that a House Committee could report recently that 'peaceful co-existence is a Communist myth!' As Barth would probably agree, the great task of 'European' diplomacy at the present time is to make *peaceful* co-existence a possibility between the two great powers, and unless this is done the future prospect is grim.

It is certainly true that Barth is not writing as an apologist for a third force or neutralist party in the present international situation ; for his concern is essentially with the task of the Church and individual Christian responsibility. One does appreciate how much he must have

thought and prayed for the witness of members of the Hungarian Reformed Church. And one can admire the testimony of a man who feels drawn to express his understanding of God's Judgment in the divisions of our times ; and calling men to accept it in penitence, takes one step himself in the way of reconstruction. It has been all too easy to say what Christians in the Eastern Communist countries should do ; and Barth is surely right in saying that we should hear them (and incidentally they have been heard again at Evanston) and try to walk together in faith and love. And if we do accept God's Judgment it is sure to call us to some of the evils lurking in our own midst, and effectively correct our self-righteousness! But having said that, surely we are called by the same judgment to protest against persecution, and we would ill-serve our Lord and our brethren if we kept quiet or became apathetic. Surely that is the point that Brunner was trying to make. And it is for the individual reader to say whether he feels that Barth has given an adequate answer.

In conclusion, I hope I have made it clear that the real value of Barth's writings in this book is to give a healthy (let me say a Christian) corrective to a good deal of our thinking on the East-West conflict of our times. I don't expect everyone to agree with his position (neither would he) but whether in agreement or disagreement I do expect readers to examine their position afresh in the light of their *Christian* responsibilities. They will find a new stimulus for their thinking and their prayers, and I trust it will lead us all, East and West, to seek to serve our Lord more faithfully in the work of His Kingdom.

W. S. REID

The Bible in World Evangelism : By A. M. Chirgwin ; Published on behalf of the United Bible Societies by the S.C.M. Press, London, 1954. Pages 166. 5s.

The book, as the author explains in the Preface, has been written at the request of the United Bible Societies as a contribution to the preparation for the Evanston Assembly of the World Council of Churches. 'The place of the Bible in Evangelism' was an important item in discussion on one of the subsidiary themes, namely, 'The Witness of the Church to those outside her life'.

While designed primarily for the object mentioned above, the book will certainly serve a wider and deeper purpose. Evangelism has been called the life-blood of the Church, and it has been the witness of Christian history that when and where this blood becomes thin or dries up, spiritual anaemia follows resulting ultimately in death. Dr. Chirgwin's book shows forcefully and convincingly that in this blood stream the Bible is one of the most vital corpuscles.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part provides historical testimony to the place of the Bible in Evangelism. Evidence has been collected from the history of the early Church, the periods of renewal, such as the Reformation, the Puritan and Pietist movements, and the Evangelical Revival of the nineteenth century, and finally from the present day. The conclusion based on the evidence collected is

summed up in these words: 'The early Church used it (the Bible) not only to instruct the faithful, but also to evangelize the non-Christian. The reformers translated it so that all men might read for themselves the message of God's grace. The Puritans and the Pietists applied it to the daily life and took it with them to the mission field as the means of winning converts to the faith. The Evangelicals founded societies to print it and to distribute it to all men every where. The evidence of history is impressive . . . whenever the Church has been engaged in trying to win the outsider and the non-Christian, it has used the Bible as its main instrument. What is more, the times when the Church has gone to its evangelistic task with the Bible open in its hands have been precisely the times when it has won many of its greatest conquests. The Bible has been in fact the cutting-edge of its advance.'

In the second section, the author has discussed the use of the Bible in individual work and collective efforts, and examples have been taken from Latin America, Africa, Asia, North America and Germany. In discussing the individual and collective approaches various methods such as colportage, newspaper evangelism, correspondence courses, music, and visual aids and radio have been mentioned. Through the discussion the same conclusion has been reached, namely that 'the Bible has a place of such importance today in concerted evangelistic efforts that those concerned for the welfare of the world-wide Christian cause cannot fail to give it their serious attention.'

The last section states the conclusions reached as a result of the enquiry and evidence.

The book is written in very simple language ; its argument is clear. The sections have been methodically arranged, and summaries and conclusions clearly stated. One is amazed at the way in which Dr. Chirgwin has marshalled his facts and evidence within such short compass. It is a book that ministers, preachers, evangelists, teachers, Bible Society secretaries as well as delegates to Evanston will find useful, inspiring and challenging.

Dr. Chirgwin has made certain practical suggestions based on his study. These are worth careful consideration by individuals, organizations and churches.

Commenting on the various methods of the use of the Bible in Evangelism, the author says, 'What is needed now is that studies should be initiated and experiments collated. For this purpose nothing would be better than that some central body of the Churches should stimulate studies and experiments, and gather up the results for the guidance of all the churches everywhere.' Here is something for the World Council of Churches to think about.

'For its own sake as well as for that of the Kingdom, the Church must make a greater use of this instrument that lies half neglected in its hands. It must no longer be content to render lip service ; it must take a full share in the work of distribution. It must set before its members the ideal of every Christian sharing in this service and must enrol them literally by tens of thousands for the work of evangelism through Scripture distribution. The Churches should regard Bible distribution as part and parcel of their evangelistic task.' Here is something for the churches to ponder over.

‘As this brief survey shows, there has been something like a re-birth of interest in the Bible during recent years. One of the most impressive things about it is that it is true of all the great branches of the Christian Church. That has probably not happened before, and it provokes all kinds of stimulating questions. Does it mean, for instance, that some new approach to the problem of unity is being revealed, an approach based on the Bible rather than on the validity of orders and sacraments ? Here is a challenging question put by Dr. Chirgwin to which all Christians and Christian organizations must seek an answer.

J. W. SADIQ



The Word of God

For the Word of God is certain and can never fail. It is clear and will never leave us in darkness. It teaches its own truth. It arises and irradiates the soul of man with full salvation and grace. It gives the soul sure comfort in God. It humbles it, so that it loses and indeed condemns itself and lays hold of God. And in God the soul lives, searching diligently after Him and despairing of all creaturely consolation. For God is its only confidence and comfort. Without Him it has no rest: it rests in Him alone: ‘My soul refused to be comforted: I remembered God and was refreshed’ (Psalm 77). Blessedness begins indeed in this present time, not essentially, but in the certainty of consoling hope.—Zwingli: *Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God* (The Library of Christian Classics Vol. XXIV).



The Individual and the Person

Individualism is a mere difference from others; a fully personal life is a growth in stature brought about by contact with, and appreciation of, the lives of others. An individualist is one who, in his actions, disregards the well-being of the group; a person is one who finds his own unique life in a society. He is firmly bound yet fully free in the relationships he enjoys with God and his neighbour.—R. C. Walton: *The Gathered Community*.

Editorial Notices

The Associate Editor announces with regret that, having accepted an invitation to a chair in the Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio, U.S.A., for the next four years, the Editor, Dr. V. E. Devadutt, will not be returning to India at this time.

The appointment of a new editor will be made and will be announced in the near future. Until this announcement is made, editorial correspondence should continue to be addressed to:

The Editor, *Indian Journal of Theology*, Serampore College, Serampore, West Bengal.

Until further announcement, all correspondence regarding the business side of the *Journal*, including payment of subscriptions (which should *not* be by cheque), changes in addresses of subscribers, new subscriptions, etc., may please be sent to:

The Baptist Mission Press, 41A Lower Circular Road, Calcutta 16.

The Indian Journal of Theology calls attention to the important new venture in theological publication in India which is represented by the launching of 'The Christian Students' Library'. This is a Library of text-books, based on the Serampore L.Th. syllabus, and published for the Senate of Serampore College by the Christian Literature Society, Madras. The books are intended to form the basis of text-books in the various languages of India but they will also be available in English. Attention is called to the article by Rev. P. de D. May in this issue, which is an extract from one of the early books in the Library.



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‘The Indian Journal of Theology’ is produced at the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, which has served the cause of Christian Literature in the East for 136 years. Its 40 languages and modern letterpress plant are at the service of those who wish to have good print produced when it is required.

For the technically minded, it may be of interest that included in the Press equipment are Linotypes, Monotypes in three languages, type foundry, six fully automatic presses, folders, four stitching machines, the newest Brehmer book sewing machine, and stereo department.

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